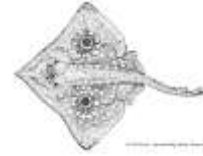


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner
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Date Issued: 5/8/13

**FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
COOK INLET AREA CLOSURES TO RETENTION OF BIG SKATE
EO # 2-GF-H-05-13**

The **retention of big skate** *Raja binoculata* as bycatch in all Cook Inlet Area directed groundfish and halibut fisheries will be **prohibited effective 12:00 noon May 9, 2013.**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that retention of big skate in the federal Central Gulf of Alaska area (CGOA) is prohibited effective 12:00 noon May 8, 2013. There is no directed fishery for big skate and all harvest occurs as bycatch during directed groundfish and halibut fisheries. Big skate harvest in the Cook Inlet Area is accounted to the federal CGOA Total Allowable Catch (TAC). Therefore, in order to provide consistency with federal regulations, avoid overharvest of big skate, and allow time to notify the fleet, big skate will close to retention in all Cook Inlet Area directed groundfish and halibut fisheries effective 12:00 noon May 9, 2013 for the remainder of the calendar year.

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